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TO: State AF/C Kevin Aiston
Fax #: 202-736-4872
FROM: US Embassy Kigali
SUBJECT: Draft Cable - Meeting With New UNAMIR Force Commander

RELEASED IN FULL

Drafted:Pol-Mil:AMarley
Cleared:Charge:JLeader

SUBJECT: Introductory Meeting With New UNAMIR Force Commander

1. Summary: Charge paid an introductory call on the new Force Commander for UNAMIR, MG Tousignant. Outgoing Force Commander, MG Dallaire, who was also present for the first portion of the meeting, criticized the international community for taking actions that would promote rather than stem an exodus from Rwanda. General Tousignant believes the departure of the French from the southwest is in the best interests of Rwanda. The U.S. Joint Task Force Commander, LTG Schroeder, who was present for the second half of meeting, explained that the U.S. has essentially accomplished its limited crisis response mission in Rwanda. End Summary.

2. Charge d'Affaires Joyce Leader, accompanied by AF Pol-Miloff, paid a 90 minute introductory call on UNAMIR's new Force Commander, Canadian Major General Guy Tousignant on 19 August. The outgoing Force Commander, Major General Romeo Dallaire, who was also present for the first 30 minutes, took the opportunity to express his concerns about recent actions by the international community that he perceives have undermined the credibility of UNAMIR.

3. General Dallaire asked, Where are the activities inside Rwanda and in the camps outside Rwanda that would help prevent an outflow of refugees from southwestern Rwanda? Answering his own question, he said recent actions taken by the international community are actually setting the stage for another Goma. The USG is seen as questioning the capability and credibility of UNAMIR by asking the Government of Rwanda to agree to an extension in the duration of the French military presence in the Humanitarian Protection Zone. Secondly, while not doing anything inside Rwanda, the international community and NGOs are conducting reconnaissance and making preparations to provide assistance in the Bukavu area. Third, he predicted the Security Council would not have the courage to support a Chapter 7 mandate for UNAMIR within the HPZ, while authorizing one for the French "Turquoise" forces, or to authorize a force in Tanzania and Zaire with enough teeth to separate suspects from genuine refugees. In sum, instead of having used the time effectively while the French were in the HPZ to prevent a refugee blowout from occurring, the international community is now trying to take actions to provide political cover (CYA) in case a blowout does occur. When asked what the needs were that should be better addressed, Dallaire responded with two: engineer capability (water production/distribution, construction, and electrical

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plant), and field medical hospitals.

4. General Tousignant then presented his initial impressions of the situation to Emboffs. He accompanied the GoR Ministers on their 18 August trip to Cyangugu, and said that he had been impressed with the reception they received. They had experienced a warm welcome upon arriving in the city, their talks were listened to attentively, and the crowd responded favorably to the answers the Ministers provided to questions posed by those in the audience. The general noted that he believed the crowd was composed primarily by those originally from Cyangugu rather than by outsiders, and that hardliners seem to have avoided the event.

5. He believes that UNAMIR can do a credible job of providing security in the southwest, and he wants the French out. He said that he would prefer a French exit on the 21st even if the GoR had agreed to an extension in the timetable of their departure. He reported that the French battalion commander in Cyangugu admitted to him that the French were routinely reprovisioning former government soldiers, providing them with food and fuel for their trucks. The General said that ex-FAR soldiers were looting and maliciously dismantling buildings in and around Cyangugu in full view of the French, who claim their mandate does not cover such activities and do nothing to stop it. As long as there is no violence, he said the French are apparently taking an "anything goes" attitude, because their numbers are so small when compared to the population in the HPZ.

6. General Tousignant said that while the French may have confiscated weapons earlier from ex-FAR soldiers and militia members, they have subsequently given them back. (Note: Embassy believes the weapons that have been redistributed were those given to the newly created Cyangugu Gendarmes.)

7. The new Force Commander then discussed the Gendarme force that has been created. He said that while he was in Cyangugu, the new GoR Minister of the Interior, Mr. Seth Sendashonga, stated that the GoR would recognize the Gendarmes as being legitimate and accept them into the new national Gendarmerie. Tousignant commented that there has been no public announcement to that effect, however, and most of the new Gendarmes are debating whether they should flee or trust the GoR and stay in place.

8. The General said that UNAMIR has a personnel strength just over 2700. While still only half the size authorized by his mandate, the arrival of the Ethiopians has significantly improved the force

*Barillon
will work
EX-GoR
ministers
allowed
to help
French
in
Cyangugu
willing
to
flee*

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posture.

9. Concerning his outlook for the future, General Tousignant said that for the short- to mid-term he sees no ex-FAR (or reconstituted force) capable of invading Rwanda, but does believe they will be capable of conducting acts of sabotage or terrorism. If UNAMIR proves incapable of controlling the border area, he believes the RPA can be expected to enter the HZ. UNAMIR must therefore quickly establish its credibility.

10. About halfway through the meeting with the Charge, the U.S. Joint Task Force Commander, LTG Schroeder arrived, accompanied by Brigadier Generals Nix and Ingersoll, and Colonel McDonough. Asked about the future U.S. role, LTG Schroeder said that he expected the Task Force to continue to be based in Entebbe, and to operate the airport in Kigali, probably through September 30. The U.S. has accomplished its mission in Rwanda: crisis/emergency response. The airport is open, it is operational 24 hours per day, and has been instrument-certified by the FAA. In late September, either Rwandans or a contractor will assume control of airport operations. By the end of the coming weekend (21 August), most strategic airlift requirements will have ended. Intra-theater C-130 airlift will continue through 30 September. The Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC), which will continue to work with the Embassy and UN agencies, will create a Movement Control Center to manage truck fleets.

11. Going into further detail about the airport, General Schroeder indicated that several of the previous airport employees have returned to Kigali and come to work. The airport is now capable of handling 1000 tons of cargo per day, but is currently receiving only 600 tons per day. More use of the airport by NGOs is needed, since the freight marshalling yard is not being stressed. The best way to provide humanitarian assistance to the Cyangugu area will be through the Kigali airport, rather than through Bukavu or Bujumbura.

12. The meeting ended at 3:15, as the official change of command ceremony for Generals Dallaire and Tousignant was scheduled for 4:00 PM.

13. Comment. General Dallaire first came to Rwanda as head of the peacekeeping reconnaissance mission a year ago. He is leaving after nine difficult months as Force Commander of the UNAMIR troops. He appeared tired, ready to leave, and genuinely disappointed over what he perceives as a lack of international support for the mission.

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